

Message Text

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ACTION CU-04

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FM AMEMBASSY SANTO DOMINGO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9785

C O N F I D E N T I A L SANTO DOMINGO 555

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: DR ELAB OTRA

SUBJECT: LEADER GRANTS

REFS: SD-247, STATE 17733

1. EMBASSY NOW CONSIDERING POSSIBILITY EXTENDING INVITATION TO VISIT US AS DEPARTMENT LEADER GRANTEE TO JOSE GOMEZ CERDA, ELISEO CANDELARIO, OR GABRIEL DEL RIO. (EMBASSY HAS ADDED DEL RIO, WHO PRESENTLY IS "CONFEDERACION AUTONOMA DE SINDICATOS CRISTIANOS" (CASC) ASSISTANT SECRETARY GENERAL, BECAUSE OF LIKELIHOOD HE WILL EMERGE AS CASC SECRETARY GENERAL AT CONFEDERATION'S FEB 10 ELECTIONS.)

2. AT THIS TIME, THE CASC, OF WHICH ALL THREE MEN ARE LEADERS, IS THE SINGLE MOST EFFECTIVE LABOR CENTRAL IN THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC AND PROBABLY THE COUNTRY'S MOST IMPORTANT LABOR ORGANIZATION. EMBASSY BELIEVES INVITING GOMEZ CERDA, CANDELARIO OR DEL RIO AS POSSIBLE GRANTEE WOULD HELP TO ESTABLISH BETTER RELATIONS WITH CASC AND, IF INVITATION ACCEPTED, GIVE ITS LEADERSHIP A BETTER AND MORE BALANCED PICTURE OF US AND US LABOR MOVEMENT. AT SAME TIME, AS AN AUTHENTIC EXPONENT OF "CHRISTIAN" UNIONISM HERE, A CASC GRANTEE SHOULD PROVE OF INTEREST TO APPROPRIATE US ORGANIZATIONS.

3. THERE FOLLOWS BIOGRAPHIC INFORMATION ON THREE LEADERS:

A. JOSE GOMEZ CERDA, BORN JUNE 28, 1937, IN SANTIAGO DROPPED OUT OF SCHOOL AT 14. STUDIED LABOR-ORIENTED COURSES AT VARIOUS "CHRISTIAN SOCIALIST" LABOR SCHOOLS
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ABROAD (MEXICO, VENEZUELA). IN 1965 DOMINICAN CIVIL WAR,

GOMEZ SERVED AS "CONSTITUTIONALIST" AMBASSADOR IN CHILE, VENEZUELA AND MEXICO. FROM 1966-71, GOMEZ WAS AN OFFICIAL OF THE CASC. HE BECAME SECRETARY GENERAL OF

THE ORGANIZATION IN FEB 1972 WHEN THE EX-SECRETARY GENERAL, HENRY MOLINA, RESIGNED TO TAKE UP DUTIES AS DEPUTY SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE "CONFEDERACION LATINOAMERICANA DE TRABAJADORES" (CLAT) IN CARACAS. AT THE TIME OF HIS ELECTION IN 1972, GOMEZ' CANDIDACY WAS OPPOSED BY A LEFTIST-COMMUNIST GROUP IN CASC WHICH WALKED OUT OF THE ORGANIZATION RATHER THAN ACCEPT THE MORE MODERATE GOMEZ AS SECRETARY GENERAL. GOMEZ, WHO HAS AUTHORED SEVEN BOOKS, IS WELL-MANNERED AND MODERATE, BUT ALSO CAN BE A FORCEFUL WRITER AND SPEAKER. HE IS APPARENTLY WILLING TO WORK WITH ANY GROUP WHICH HE THINKS CAN HELP CASC, AND FOR THIS REASON MAINTAINS TIES TO BALAGUER GOVERNMENT. ALTHOUGH HE HAS SCORED US PUBLICLY AND PRIVATELY FOR 1965 INTERVENTION, HE IS, NONETHELESS, WILLING TO HEAR BOTH SIDES OF ANY ARGUMENT. HE HAS BEEN FRIENDLY AND FORTHRIGHT TOWARD EMBASSY OFFICIALS AND HAS ATTENDED A RECEPTION AT THE RESIDENCE WHERE HE APPEARED RELAXED AND CORDIAL.

B. ELISEO CANDELARIO (34) BORN IN THE COUNTRYSIDE NEAR SAN FRANCISCO DE MACORIS HAS BEEN THE SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE CASC'S LARGEST UNIT, 30,000 MEMBER "FEDERACION DE LIGAS AGRARIAS CRISTIANAS" (FEDELAC), SINCE 1972. CANDELARIO HAD WORKED AS BOTH A FARMER AND BOILERMAKER BEFORE BECOMING INVOLVED WITH FEDELAC IN 1964. SINCE THAT TIME, HE HAS CONCENTRATED ON ORGANIZING RURAL WORKERS. CANDELARIO IS REPORTEDLY CLOSE TO PROGRESSIVE JESUIT PRIESTS WORKING IN RURAL LABOR SECTOR AND IS A PRACTICING AND DEVOUT CATHOLIC. IN ADDITION TO FEDELAC POSITION, HE IS ALSO DOMINICAN REPRESENTATIVE TO CLAT'S CAMPESINO ORGANIZATION, "FEDERACION CAMPESINA DE LATINOAMERICA." HE HAS HAD LABOR TRAINING FROM "CHRISTIAN" LABOR ORGANIZATION IN VENEZUELA AND HAS TRAVELLED EXTENSIVELY IN LATIN AMERICA. HE IS FRIENDLY AND OPEN WITH EMBASSY OFFICERS.

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C. GABRIEL DEL RIO WAS BORN IN VILLA ALTAGRACIA OF PUERTO RICAN PARENTS IN 1937. HE STUDIED PHILOSOPHY AND MATHEMATICS AT CATHOLIC SEMINARY, BUT DROPPED OUT AFTER COMPLETING THE EQUIVALENT OF THE 12TH GRADE. HE WAS WORKING AS A LABORER AT THE GOVERNMENT TEXTILE MILL IN SANTO DOMINGO WHEN HE JOINED THE CASC IN 1962. HE ROSE QUICKLY TO BE CASC SECRETARY OF ORGANIZATION AND LATER SECRETARY OF EDUCATION AND WAS ELECTED ASSISTANT

SECRETARY GENERAL IN 1972. DEL RIO HAS HAD A YEAR'S LABOR TRAINING AT THE KONRAD ADENAUER INSTITUTE IN WEST GERMANY AND TRAVELLED EXTENSIVELY IN EUROPE AND LATIN AMERICA. HE SPEAKS WELL OF THE US AND THINGS AMERICAN AND HAS BEEN CONSISTENTLY POLITE AND COOPERATIVE TOWARD EMBASSY OFFICERS.

COMMENT: THE POSSIBILITY OF NOMINATING A CASC REPRESENTATIVE AS A LEADER GRANTEE HAS BEEN DISCUSSED WITH THE SANTO DOMINGO AIFLD DIRECTOR WHO DOES NOT OPPOSE THEIR NOMINATION. ONE OF THE EMBASSY'S MORE SUCCESSFUL FY 1972 LEADER GRANTEES WAS LUIS ESTRELLA COHEN, FOUNDER AND LONG TIME SECRETARY GENERAL OF FEDELAC. WASHINGTON AGENCIES APPEARED TO EXPERIENCE NO DIFFICULTY IN PROGRAMMING HIM AND THE GRANTEE WAS EXTREMELY PLEASED WITH HIS TREATMENT AND THE FRUITFUL NATURE OF HIS MANY INTERVIEWS. SINCE ESTRELLA'S RETURN, HE HAS PUBLICLY PRAISED THE US AND HAS BEEN ACTIVELY ENGAGED IN AGRARIAN REFORM PROGRAMS. HURWITCH

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